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AGENCY NEWS

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TEA Releases Spring 2021 STAAR Grades 3-8 and End-of-Course Assessment Results; Outcomes for In-Person Learners Appreciably Higher Than for Those Who Were Remote

D : , 06/28/2021 - 10 00

AUSTIN, Texas – June 28, 2021 – Today, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released spring 2021 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) results. The results include exams in mathematics and reading for grades 3–8, 4th & 7th grade writing, 5th and 8th grade science, 8th grade social studies, and high school end-of-course (EOC) exams in Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

As a result of the learning disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students not meeting grade level increased from 2019 across all subject areas and grade levels, with English I and English II being the only exceptions. As a subject area, mathematics reflects the largest decline in proficiency across all grade levels. Districts with a higher percentage of students learning virtually experienced a greater degree of declines. Districts with the highest percentage of in-person learners largely avoided any learning declines in reading.

In response, Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath said, “Thankfully, from early on, Texas prioritized the availability of in-person instruction during this tremendously difficult year. When students come into Texas public schools, they are well-served by Texas educators—a fact that these scores confirm. But it is also painfully clear that the pandemic had a very negative impact on learning. I shudder to consider the long-term impact on children in states that restricted in-person instruction.”

Morath continued, “Now, we have full assessment results in hand for nearly all Texas students. The data may be disheartening, but with it, our teachers and school leaders are building action plans to support students in the new school year. Policymakers are using it to direct resources where they are needed most. And parents can log into [TexasAssessment.gov](https://texasassessment.gov) (<https://texasassessment.gov/>) to understand how well each of their chil-

dren learned this year’s material, and how to support the academic growth of their children moving forward. Armed with the best information, working closely together, and with significant new supports from the Texas Legislature, we will provide stronger academic growth for students than ever before.”

These results highlight the support infrastructure needed to address lost learning opportunities and emphasize the important role of recently passed legislation, including House Bill 4545, in providing Texas educators the resources, tools, and funding necessary to dramatically accelerate student learning. Under HB 4545, parents of eligible students who took an assessment will have the opportunity to access high performing teachers, as well as benefit from additional tutoring. Additionally, TEA will be working with school systems this summer and in the coming school years to bolster their efforts to accelerate learning by making available rigorous instructional materials, additional teacher support, help wherever appropriate to expand learning time, and targeted tutoring.

STAAR Results

Students receive a STAAR performance label of *Masters Grade Level*, *Meets Grade Level*, *Approaches Grade Level*, or *Did Not Meet Grade Level*. Performance labels of *Masters*, *Meets*, or *Approaches* indicate satisfactory achieve-

ment on the assessment.

2021 STAAR 3–8 Mathematics Results

S	G	A L (A)	M G L (A)	M G L
M	3	61%	30%	14%
	4	58%	35%	21%
	5	6 %	43%	24%

	6	66%	34%	15%
	7	54%	25%	11%
	8	60%	35%	10%

2021 STAAR 3-8 Reading Results

S	G	A L (A)	M G L (A)	M G L
R	3	68%	38%	1 %
	4	63%	36%	18%
	5	72%	45%	30%

	6	61%	31%	14%
	7	68%	44%	25%
	8	72%	45%	21%

2021 STAAR Writing, Science, and Social Studies Results

S & G	A G L (A)	M G L (A)	M G L
4 G	53%	26%	8%
7 G	61%	31%	%
5 G S	61%	30%	12%
8 G S	67%	42%	23%
8 G S S	56%	27%	13%

2021 End-of-Course EOC Results

S	A G L (A)	M G L (A)	M G L
A I	72%	41%	23%
E I	66%	50%	12%

E II	70%	57%	11%
B	81%	54%	22%
U.S. H	88%	6 %	43%

Year-over-year comparisons with 2020 are not possible, as STAAR assessments were not administered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following information provides a comparison with 2019 results (the most recent year for which we have statewide results available):

Meets Grade Level or Above in Mathematics

STAAR/EOC T	2019	2021
G 3 M	48%	30%
G 4 M	46%	35%
G 5 M	56%	43%
G 6 M	45%	34%
G 7 M	41%	25%
G 8 M	55%	35%
A I EOC	62%	41%
G 3 M (S)	31%	14%
G 4 M (S)	26%	13%
G 5 M (S)	28%	17%
A M A	50%	35%

Meets Grade Level or Above in Reading

STAAR/EOC T	2019	2021
G 3 R	44%	38%
G 4 R	43%	36%
G 5 R	51%	45%
G 6 R	36%	31%
G 7 R	47%	44%
G 8 R	53%	45%
E I EOC	4 %	50%

E	II EOC	51%	57%
G	3 R (S)	3 %	24%
G	4 R (S)	2 %	24%
G	5 R (S)	53%	45%
A R	A	47%	43%

Meets Grade Level or Above in Writing, Science, and Social Studies

STAAR/EOC T	2019	2021
G 4	33%	26%
G 7	40%	31%
G 5 S	48%	30%

G 8 S	4 %	42%
B EOC	63%	54%
G 8 S S	35%	27%
U.S. H EOC	75%	6 %

Districts with a higher percentage of students learning virtually experienced larger learning declines in all grades and subjects. For example, districts in which 25 percent or less of students were learning virtually for most of the year saw a 9-percentage point drop in satisfactory performance in mathematics from 2019 to 2021 as compared to districts in which 75 percent or more of students were learning virtually, which saw a drop of 32 percentage points. For more data on outcomes broken out by type of learning, see the 2021 STAAR Analysis: <http://tea.texas.gov/staar/rpt/sum> (<https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-statewide-summary-reports>).

This year, 85 percent of eligible students participated in grades 3-8 STAAR assessments, as compared to 96 percent in 2019. In high school, 92 percent of eligible students participated in EOC assessments, as compared to 97 percent in 2019. Overall STAAR participation in spring 2021 was 87 percent. Of those eligible students who did not participate in the assessment, there was a slightly higher concentration of economically disadvantaged students than of participating students. The high level of participation—even among students who remained virtual most of the year—allows for comparisons with the most recent year for which we have assessment data (2019) and ensures more students will benefit from enhanced academic supports that come with having access to the robust information STAAR provides.

To Learn More

To review STAAR state-level reports, visit the Texas Education Agency website: <http://tea.texas.gov/staar/rpt/sum> (<https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-statewide-summary-reports>).

As the summer progresses, TEA will provide additional detailed analyses of participating students, including more detailed demographic analysis. A student-level summary of performance for students who attended school virtually during the 2020–21 school year as compared to those who attended in-person will be available this coming winter.

Parents are encouraged to Log In, and Learn More, about their child's results by going to www.TexasAssessment.gov (<https://texasassessment.gov/>). A unique student access code (provided by local school districts) allows parents to view a variety of resources and assessment components, including each STAAR question and answer—along with their child's answers. The website also provides resources designed to help parents prepare their son or daughter as he or she progresses from grade level to grade level. Resources include tools to support a student's ability to read and write, as well as tips and questions to help prepare for parent-teacher conferences in the 2021-22 school year.

